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GIORDANO BRUNO. By T. Lewis McIntyre. London: Macmillan & Co., Lim., 1903.

In every history of philosophy the name of Bruno marks what is called the transition from mediæval to modern thought; but the abstracts of his philosophy do not show that he was remarkable as an original thinker. His philosophy seems hardly distinguishable from many of the Pantheisms which preceded him. For nearly all his distinctions he is indebted either to the Platonists or to the Aristotelians whom he attacked.

Mr. McIntyre's book is the first philosophical biography of Bruno of any thoroughness in the English language. It is a most interesting book. He has divided it into two parts. The first tells the story of Bruno's life; the second gives an account of his speculations and attempts to trace their influence and descent.

The first part is extremely interesting. Mr. McIntyre has succeeded in giving his readers an idea of the most romantic of philosophers, of the emotional value of his philosophy, and in great measure even of the times in which he lived. Without Pater's literary arts and graces, he has drawn Bruno more vividly and convincingly than he appears in Gaston de Latour. Judicious quotation is the best method of historical portraiture. This book is full of interesting quotations.

The second part is not such a good piece of work. In the preface Mr. McIntyre says that he has not tried to give a systematic outline of Bruno's philosophy ("which would be nearly impossible"), but to sketch, "as nearly as possible, in Bruno's words," the problems which interested him and the solutions he offered. He adds that Bruno's style "lends itself to selection, but not easily to compact exposition." The result is that Mr. McIntyre's account of Bruno's philosophy is a patchwork of unreconciled quotations. Passages occur in which there is an attempt to pull mutually repulsive tenets together; but unless the reader's intelligence is of the kind which "brightens at the clash of yes and no," he will become confused and probably turn with relief to some frankly enigmatic, condensed account of Bruno in a history of philosophy. This is more Bruno's fault than his expositors'; but granted that it was impossible to make a system out of theories which Bruno taught as coherent, there was a second alternative to the merely selective method; namely,

to point out how badly his philosophy hung together. If Mr. McIntyre, for instance, had shown how Bruno's attempts to reconcile his philosophic pantheism with scientific atomism failed, it would have been easier to understand these attempts. I believe a more critical method would have enabled the ordinary reader to see more in the arguments which Bruno found convincing. The monadistic side of Bruno's philosophy (apparently most justly) is given more prominence than is the case in other epitomes. Mr. McIntyre draws a parallel between the monad of Bruno and the monad of Leibnitz to show that the resemblance is only superficial. He decides that there is not the slightest ground for attributing direct influence. But he thinks, with Sigwart, that Spinoza may have been influenced by Bruno's "*De Deo seu Homine*" in writing the short "*Tractate*." All the ideas, however, which are common to both philosophers are the property of the Neo-Platonists, and the supposition rests on the fact that the collocation of ideas is very similar in both these works. The collocation itself seems a very natural one to occur independently to two students of Neo-Platonism, so the supposition remains a possible probability and nothing more.

Mr. McIntyre is not more successful in finding traces of Bruno's ideas among his contemporaries. He expresses surprise that there are so few. Bacon is discussed as a possible instance; but again the ideas which are common to both are to be found elsewhere as well: both believed "in a purified natural magic"—but this was the general belief among the intelligent of their age; both inveighed against Aristotle and systematising schoolmen—but this animus sprang mainly, in Bruno's case, from his mystical bias, in Bacon's, from a belief in the methods of natural philosophy; both accepted and discussed the distinction between *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*—but in Bruno it was transcended, in Bacon it threw back to "form" and "substance"; both admired the book of Job, says Mr. McIntyre, and quoted Solomon to the effect that there is nothing new under the sun—but this proves nothing.

On the whole, the impression that this book leaves behind, contrary to the drift of certain passages, in which it is urged that Bruno has a right to a more important place in the genealogy of thought than is generally accorded to him, is that he was not a great philosopher, but a great imaginative thinker, with a passion for dialectic. No man ever spent himself more furiously in dis-

coursing upon the nature of man and of the world in which he lives; but, as Mr. McIntyre remarks, in contrasting him with Descartes, Descartes' aim was "certainty," while Bruno aimed at "knowledge," at adding to or correcting "the sum of general opinion as to the world as a whole." In other words, Descartes aimed at finding truths, which cannot be doubted, like a philosopher; Bruno at discovering ideas which expressed or harmonised with his emotional attitude towards experience, like a prophet. He is only a great philosopher in the sense that Carlyle, Nietzsche, and Meredith (the spirit of whose poems, by the bye, is very like that which animates the religious utterances of Bruno) are philosophers; and if traces of his great influence are sought for, they will be found not in philosophies but in literature and the current notions of succeeding times, in the poems of Sidney and Brooke, in the paganism and amoristic philosophy of the Renaissance.

"Man should make much of life, as Nature's table
 Wherein she writes the cypher of her glory.
 Forsake not Nature, nor misunderstand her,
 Her mysteries are read without Faith's eyesight.

 Yet when each of us in his own heart looks
 He finds a God there far unlike his books."

These lines of Brooke express exactly the effect of Bruno's teaching.

Bruno regarded himself as a prophet of a new religion. He died for it; and this book is full of his splendid boasts of what it had done and could do for mankind. Mr. McIntyre makes the reader feel as he reads that these boasts were not vain. That is the best success a biographer of Bruno can achieve.

D. MACCARTHY.

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To put into the hands of the student a selection from the treasures of theistic thought in the past was an excellent idea, and the editing of these selections fell into excellent hands when it was